12/14/87 e4590-1

A Hitchcock Publication / December 1987

INFOSYSTEMS

Will an Apple® today keep IBM® away? digital™ may think so.

Project Management Software

IS and the Corporate Culture • Teaching Computers to Talk

Using Computers to Conquer, Not Divide

********** 5-DIGIT 20814
231 =1291875 SRIAO 22
SRI ACQ 122G
CONGRESSIONAL INFO SVCE
4520 EAST WEST HWY
BETHESDA MD 20814

ISSN 0364-5533

INFOSYSTEMS

December 1987 Volume 34 Number 12

Editor & Publisher
Wayne L. Rhodes, Jr.

Founding Editor
Arnold E. Keller

Senior Editors
East: David H. Freedman
West: Jeffrey A. Chester
Software: Jan Snyders, CSP

Associate Editor
Renee M. Robbins

Production Editor
Joyce McNeely

Art Director
H. Dean Willis

Editorial Assistant
Sandy Donovan

Production Coordinator
Marie Spiotta

Contributing Editors
John Diebold, Chairman
The Diebold Group, Inc.
New York, NY

Robert E. Johnston
Director, Data Processing
Phoenix Mutual Life Insurance Co.
Hartford, CT

Myles E. Walsh
Director of Information Systems
CBS Records
New York, NY

Circulation
Group Circulation Manager: Ellen Cowles
Circulation Supervisor: Carol Trator
Send subscription information to
INFOSYSTEMS
Hitchcock Publishing Co.
PO Box 3007
Wheaton, IL 60189-9933

Editorial Offices
Headquarters: Hitchcock Building
Wheaton, IL 60188, (312) 665-1000
PO Box 337
Brookline, MA 02146, (617) 723-8970
1600 Woolsey St.
Berkeley, CA 94703, (415) 528-1320
Jan Snyders
PO Box 187
Lockport, IL 60441, (815) 485-8962

Published by Hitchcock Publishing Co.
25W550 Geneva Rd., Wheaton, IL 60188
President, Loren M. Walsh
Phone: (312) 665-1000 Cable: HITCHPUB
Telex: 72-0404
MCI Mail 220-0783 Easylink 62608100
FAX (312) 462-2225

One of the
ABC PUBLISHING Companies

ABC Publishing, President, Robert G. Burton
1330 Avenue of the Americas
New York, New York 10019

INFOSYSTEMS (USPS 771-000) is published monthly. Copyright 1987 Hitchcock Publishing Company, a Capital Cities ABC, Inc. company. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted by any means without permission from the publisher. One year subscription rate $70.00 in the USA, $80.00 in Canada and Mexico. Single copy rates: $6.50 in the USA, $7.50 in Canada and Mexico. For international subscriptions, contact Hitchcock Publishing Company, Fulfillment Office, P.O. Box C-409, Birmingham, AL 35283-0409. Printed in the USA. Second class postage paid at Wheaton, IL and additional mailing offices. Postmaster: Return form 3579 to: INFOSYSTEMS, Hitchcock Publishing Company, 25W550 Geneva Road, Wheaton, IL 60188.

ABP BPA

14

28

INSIDE INFO

14
Will an Apple Today Keep IBM Away? Digital May Think So.
While customers are busy tying equipment together themselves, two successful IBM challengers may be joining forces.

16
Unix Challenges Proprietary Systems
Unix coupled with Intel's 80386 chip can provide the functionality of a proprietary operating system within a multivendor environment.

18
Using Computers to Conquer, Not Divide
Systems designed to complement workers' jobs and expertise bring Scandanavian firms well beyond mere comfort and safety issues.

22
Automated Expense Reports
With the right software and a little cooperation, IS managers can make an important strategic gain.

23
When Smaller Is Better
Midsize companies may find their best software source is the innovative small vendor.

FEATURES

28
Conclusions & Recommendations:
Teaching Computers to Talk
Success with computer communications takes persistence and hard work, but it's one of the easiest ways to overcome system incompatibility.

30
Inforum: **IS and the Corporate Culture**
Although many organizations convey a clear idea of what employees are trying to do, others seem burdened with unwritten rules and procedures. How do IS managers fit in?

34
Project Management:
The Automated Timekeeper
Accurately modeling a project and maintaining its status takes a lot of hard work. Software can automate that process and provide additional dividends.

40
Snyders on Software:
Tools for the Masses
When everyday tasks such as report writing and internal communication are made easier, users are the big winners.

48
Sake of Security:
More Action in the Networks.
A network chart can help you avoid hidden risks by identifying all access paths into your data center.

APPLICATIONS

43 All-Purpose Tracker
43 Fuel for Management
46 Cobol Not Abandoned
46 Ad Hoc Reporting
47 Chemical Reports Developed
47 Conversion Running Smooth

DEPARTMENTS

6 Letters
10 Editorial
12 In the News
26 Arnie
42 Info Software
51 Literature
52 Products/Services Info

EDITORIAL

■ *By Wayne L. Rhodes, Jr.*
Editor

■ ***Constant change in software products and user demands makes training an on-going, and increasingly complex, requirement of ICs.***

IC Help Wanted

The rapid growth and implementation of the information center (IC) concept, observed over the past two years, has apparently peaked. Computer Intelligence, a market research firm based in La Jolla, CA, reported this summer that the percentage of IBM and compatible mainframe sites with an IC in place rose from 30 percent in July 1985 to 37 percent in July 1987. By contrast, the number of sites planning to implement an IC dropped considerably during this period from 27 percent to just eight percent.

Computer Intelligence says penetration of the existing site base by the IC concept has begun to level off. The estimated number of IC site installations grew at only a three percent rate in the past two years. The market researcher sites two "obvious reasons" for the slowing of IC implementation activity: Sites with a requirement for a formalized IC department and those having the necessary resources have already implemented the concept; smaller sites and system operations have not recognized the need for a formal IC or cannot handle the staffing or funding.

Crwth Computer Coursewares (Santa Monica, CA), in its third annual IC survey, found resource limitations a severe problem, even for those companies that have implemented ICs. Crwth identifies the foremost obstacle to desktop computing as the lack of trainers. The proportion of ICs faced with this problem increased between 1985 and 1987, according to Crwth's findings. The survey indicates the majority of ICs are inadequately staffed in a variety of job functions: trainers, products specialists, applications development specialists and hotline consultants.

The constant change in software products only exacerbates the situation. Crwth points out that the change coupled with user demands makes training an on-going, and increasingly complex requirement of ICs. Organizations are caught in a dilemma: capabilities dwindling while complexity soars.

Everyone seems to be caught in the dilemma. Two of the leading software suppliers to desktops, Lotus and Micropro, now charge for calls to their help centers. Lotus charges $150 for 20 calls; Micropro $100 for 10 calls.

"The biggest single problem—vendor or user—is support," asserts Jose V. Porto, vice president sales and marketing, MSR Corp., Atlanta. "Fifty people will answer 50 questions 50 different ways. You take on the costs of training someone as a specialist and they move on in a year and a half."

Porto contends the true strategic issues revolving around micros are not IBM versus Apple, but rather the expenditures involved. He mentions a survey released in the *Wall Street Journal* in June that set the hidden costs of microcomputers at $7,200 per year. General support comprised the biggest cost, approximately one-third. The estimates are based on one person supporting 50 to 100 microcomputer users.

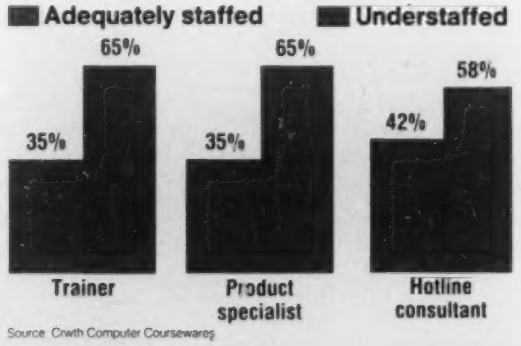
MSR, whose full name is Micro Support Resource, offers an innovative solution to this dilemma. The MSR Answerline responds to questions about usage of IBM PCs and compatibles, the DOS operating system, hardware components and popular software products. A toll-free telephone call will put the micro user in touch with a support representative who will help solve any problem from implementation to usage.

"We're there to answer questions," Porto emphasizes. "When a software package moves from Release 1.0 to 1.2, it makes little difference to us. It's just an add on to our services. We'll support multiple copies of the same software. Organizations do not want to do that. There is a limit to their resources."

MSR is selling its services at unlimited calls for a monthly fee ranging from $275 down to $150, depending on number of computers. MSR is also being offered as a service by some vendors who do not want to take on the costs associated with setting up user support services. It could be that this kind of service may be a panacea for those capabilities/complexities doldrums. (15)

For more information on MSR Answerline, enter No. 14 on the Reader Information Card.

Information Center Staffing Adequacy



Source: Crwth Computer Coursewares